

# ***The Electric Mercury***

**U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, January 2001**

**For more on these and other important stories, see January 2001 printed issue of The Mercury.  
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.**

## **Frequent deployments will bring more pay**

An Army “punch clock” now tracks the number of days a soldier spends deployed and will signal when each soldier may be due extra pay. A new law provides an extra \$100 per day for soldiers deployed more than 401 days in any rolling 730-day window.

## **New course produces better officers**

The new and improved, redesigned 2000 model AMEDD officer is now available at your local Officer Basic Course....New, more educated models come fully equipped with agile and analytical minds, expanded knowledge, strongly defined values, and technology-based perspectives.

## **New AMSC chief sets priorities for corps**

The colonel pointed to a wall banner. “Those are my priorities,” said COL Rebecca S. Hooper, new chief of the Army Medical Specialist Corps. “They spell out pride....” The words on the banner are Productivity, Resourcefulness, Integrity, Development and Enthusiasm. (With a sidebar on accreditation of Army physical-therapy residencies by the American Physical Therapy Association.)

## **Service links military, civilian pharmacies**

Defense Department’s new Pharmacy Data Transaction Service uses state-of-the-art technology to link patient information among military pharmacies, the National Mail Order Program, and civilian retailers in the TRICARE managed-care network. Officials say this linking will reduce risks of adverse drug reactions or medication errors.

## **Simulation center adds realism to training**

The Defense Department’s new National Capital Area Medical Simulation Center at Walter Reed Army Medical Center is designed to save lives. Medical professionals trained on its three state-of-the-art components – virtual-reality technology, computerized mannequin simulators, and patient “actors” – will make fewer mistakes, officials say.

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Other important stories in the January *Mercury* include:

● In his travels as The Surgeon General and MEDCOM Commander, writes LTG James B. Peake in his monthly column, he has been struck by the quality of AMEDD people and their dedication to the AMEDD mission. He cites several examples.

● Soon all military health-care providers, from the Pentagon to remote outposts, will be just a computer screen away from a complete, authoritative medical library, as Army, Navy and Air Force medical services contract for access to Internet medical libraries.

● TRICARE, spouse tuition assistance, household goods replacement, and sponsorship top list of 13 new Army Family Action Program issues. Two TRICARE issues surfaced: accurate information and securing care without upfront costs at remote overseas sites.

● Deployment Environmental Surveillance Program at the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine works with commanders to identify and minimize health threats in areas where American troops deploy.

● U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases helps local, state and federal officials investigate West Nile virus outbreak in northeastern U.S. The mosquito-borne bird disease also affects humans. USAMRIID analyzed specimens; provided equipment, chemicals and training; and helped with field studies of birds and mosquitoes.

● 1LT Jackie Smalls, a Tripler Army Medical Center environmental-science officer on temporary duty with U.S. Support Group East Timor, runs complex polio-vaccination program for children on the northern coast of that Southeast Asian island.

● Two MEDCOM officers are on U.S. Army team that completes Ironman Triathlon – a grueling long-distance swimming, bicycling and running competition – in Hawaii.

● SPC Giraldo Gonzalez, a William Beaumont Army Medical Center operating-room technician, knows the value of voting. He escaped from his native Cuba on a small boat, giving up the prestige of being a medical doctor at home for freedom in a new land.

● Photos show ophthalmologist MAJ Stephen Fox examining a patient's eyes following laser surgery at Fort Knox, Ky.; a stream crossing by LAV III light armored vehicles of the type the U.S. Army will adopt for its interim brigades of the Army Transformation.

● Readers can rate their own emotional welfare using the Goldberg Well-being Scale provided in a U.S. Army Center of Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine article. Those who need help are pointed to several sources of assistance.

● On commentary page, cancer survivor Doug Soleida of Fort Huachuca, Ariz., describes how the battle for life transforms a cancer patient's life and values; and SGT Michelle Rowan of Tripler Army Medical Center reminds people to be sure they are ready and able to care for a pet before they take on the responsibility for one.